

Message Text

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PAGE 01 TOKYO 03112 101527Z

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ACTION EA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-02 INR-07 L-02

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 OMB-01

NIC-01 SAM-01 EUR-12 /070 W
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R 100855Z MAR 75

FM AMEMBASSY TOKYO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8568

CINCPAC HONOLULU HI

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CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, JA

SUBJECT: CONSERVATIVES CHALLENGE JCP-BACKED GOVERNOR IN OSAKA
ELECTION

SUMMARY: ALTHOUGH COMING APRIL 13 TOKYO GUBERNATORIAL ELECTION HAS
RECEIVED HEAVIER MEDIA COVERAGE, OSAKA GUBERNATORIAL ELECTION TO
BE HELD SAME DAY IS ALSO VERY IMPORTANT. WITH OPPOSITION PARTIES
DIVIDED, CONSERVATIVES THINK THAT THEY HAVE CHANCE OF
DEFEATING INCUMBENT OSAKA GOVERNOR KURODA WHO IS BACKED BY JCP.
END SUMMARY.

1. WHILE UPCOMING TOKYO APRIL 13 TOKYO GUBERNATORIAL ELECTION HAS
CAPTURED MAJOR SHARE OF PRESS ATTENTION IN RECENT WEEKS, OSAKA
GUBERNATORIAL ELECTION, TO BE HELD SAME DAY, SEEMS TO BE EVERY BIT
AS IMPORTANT, AND PERHAPS EVEN MORE SO. IN ADDITION TO INVOLVING
ADMINISTRATIVE CONTROL OF JAPAN'S SECOND LARGEST CITY, OSAKA CONTEST
IS FIRST IN MAJOR URBAN CENTER WHERE CANDIDATE BACKED SOLELY BY
JCP COULD BE ELECTED. THAT CANDIDATE IS INCUMBENT GOVERNOR
RYOICHI KURODA (63). HE IS BEING CHALLENGED BY HIROSHI
YUKAWA, 56, (LDP) AND MASAMI TAKEUCHI, 68, (JSP-KOMEITO-DSP).

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PAGE 02 TOKYO 03112 101527Z

2. DURING RECENT OSAKA VISIT, EMBOFF RECEIVED IMPRESSION

THAT WHILE CONSERVATIVES EARLIER FELT NO HOPE OF UNSEATING JURODA AND WERE EVEN HAVING TROUBLE FINDING CANDIDATE WILLING TO CHALLENGE HIM, THEY WERE NOW PREDICTING THAT THEIR MAN WOULD GIVE INCUMBENT CLOSE FIGHT. THIS GUARDED OPTIMISM WAS DIRECT OUTGROWTH OF FACT THAT LATE LAST YEAR JSP, WHICH ORIGINALLY SUPPORTED KURODA ALONG WITH JCP, HAD FALLEN OUT WITH GOVERNOR AND JCP, CHARGING UNDUE COMMUNIST INFLUENCE IN OSAKA ADMINISTRATION. WITH REFORMIST VOTE THUS SPLIT IN THREE MAN FIELD, CONSERVATIVES THOUGH THEY NOW HAD CHANCE OF SQUEEZING BY TO VICTORY IN ELECTION.

3. GOVERNOR KURODA IS WELL KNOWN TO PUBLIC, CONTROLS LEVERS OF PATRONAGE AND POSSESSES ADVANTAGES USUALLY ASSOCIATED WITH INCUMBENT CANDIDATE. MOREOVER, DESPITE FACT THAT JSP IS INVOLVED IN BACKING ANOTHER CONTENDER, AT LEAST SOME JSP AND SOHYO ELEMENTS (TEACHERS UNION) ARE REPORTEDLY STILL LOYAL TO GOVERNOR. AT SAME TIME, ONE-TIME OSAKA CITY UNIVERSITY PROFESSOR KURODA HAS BEEN CRITICIZED FOR INEFFECTIVENESS AS ADMINISTRATOR AND FOR TILT TOWARD COMMUNISTS.

4. CONSERVATIVE CANDIDATE YUKAWA IS FORMER OSAKA VICE GOVERNOR AND HAS ALSO SERVED IN NATIONAL LEVEL GOVERNMENT POSITIONS. SENIOR PREFECTURAL OFFICIAL REPORTEDLY GIVE HIM HIGH MARKS AS ADMINISTRATOR. IN ADDITION TO LDP AND BUSINESS BACKING, CONSERVATIVES THINK HE CAN COUNT ON SUBSTANTIAL NUMBER OF KOMEITO AND DSP VOTES ALTHOUGH THOSE PARTIES ARE FORMALLY COMMITTED TO THIRD CANDIDATE MASAMI TAKEUCHI.

5. JSP-KOMEITO-DSP CANDIDATE TAKEUCHI, PRESIDENT OF ST. ANDREWS UNIVERSITY, HAS NO GOVERNMENT EXPERIENCE. HE IS ALMOST 70 YEARS OLD, HAS HAD POLICY DIFFERENCES WITH JSP (OVER CONSTRUCTION OF NEW OSAKA AIRPORT), AND HAS PUBLICLY ADMITTED THAT HE ONCE SUPPORTED ELEMENTS OF JAPANESE RED ARMY. THESE FACTORS, TOGETHER WITH FACT THAT SOME OF HIS OSTENSIBLE SUPPORTERS FAVOR KURODA AND OTHERS YUKAWA, LEAD OBSERVERS TO CONCLUSION THAT HE IS LIKELY TO BE THIRD PLACE FINISHER. REAL CONTEST, AS THEY SEE IT, IS BETWEEN INCUMBENT KURODA AND LDP CHALLENGER YUKAWA.

6. IT IS WORTH NOTING THAT THE "DOWA" (OUTCAST ASSIMILATION) ISSUE IS NOT PRIMARY SOURCE OF JSP-JCP SPLIT IN OSAKA AS IT IS IN TOKYO. ALTHOUGH KURODA HAS IN EFFECT ALLOWED THE JSP-LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PAGE 03 TOKYO 03112 101527Z

AFFILIATED DOWA GROUP TO CONTROL WELFARE PROGRAM IN OSAKA, JCP HAS BEEN WILLING TO LIVE WITH THIS BECAUSE OF KURODA'S TILT TO JCP IN OTHER AREAS OF ADMINISTRATION. LOCAL OBSERVERS FELT, THEREFORE, THAT EVEN IF DOWA PROBLEM RESOLVED IN TOKYO IT WOULD NOT LEAD TO RESOLUTION OF JSP-JCP DIFFERENCES IN OSAKA.

7. COMMENT: GIVEN SPECTER OF JCP-BACKED CANDIDATE WINNING GUBERNATORIAL ELECTION IN JAPAN'S SECOND CITY, CONSERVATIVES

APPEAR TO BE PLACING AS MUCH EMPHASIS ON OSAKA AS THEY ARE ON MORE WIDELY PUBLICIZED CAMPAIGN IN TOKYO. IN ADDITION TO DOMESTIC POLITICAL IMPACT OF KURODA VICTORY, LDP LEADERS FEAR THAT SUCH WIN WOULD GIVE FOREIGN NATIONS EXAGGERATED IMPRESSION THAT JAPAN IS MOVING TOWARD LEFT.

8. IN NEITHER OSAKA NOR TOKYO ARE CONSERVATIVES PREDICTING VICTORY, BUT, AS RESULT OF OPPOSITION DISUNITY, THEY ARE MORE OPTIMISTIC ABOUT CHANCES THAN WAS CASE EVEN FEW WEEKS AGO. THEY ARE ALSO NO DOUBT ENCOURAGED BY DECISIVE FEBRUARY GUBERNATORIAL ELECTION VICTORY IN AICHI PREFECTURE AND ARE NOW EVEN TALKING ABOUT POSSIBILITY OF DELIVERING "DOUBLE PUNCH" TO REFORMISTS BY WINNING BOTH OSAKA AND TOKYO. IT IS CLEAR, HOWEVER, THAT THEY WOULD BE EXTREMELY HAPPY TO WIN EVEN ONE. FROM OUR TALKS WITH LDP PEOPLE AND POLITICAL OBSERVERS, IT IS ALSO CLEAR THAT WIN IN EITHER OSAKA OR TOKYO, IN ADDITION TO BUOYING UP LDP GENERALLY, WILL PROBABLLY ACCRUE TO PERSONAL ADVANTAGE OF PRIME MINISTER MIKI WHO WILL BE ABLE TO CLAIM VICTORY WAS RESULT OF IMPRRVED PUBLIC IMAGE HE HAS GIVEN CONSERVATIVE CAUSE.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PROVINCIAL ELECTIONS, POLITICAL PARTIES, POLITICAL LEADERS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 10 MAR 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: GolinoFR
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975TOKYO03112
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750083-0780
From: TOKYO
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750364/aaaacgff.tel
Line Count: 136
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EA
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: GolinoFR
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 15 JUL 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <15 JUL 2003 by BoyleJA>; APPROVED <16 JUL 2003 by GolinoFR>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
05 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: CONSERVATIVES CHALLENGE JCP-BACKED GOVERNOR IN OSAKA ELECTION
TAGS: PINT, JA, JCP, (KURODA, RYOICHI), (YUKAWA, HIROSHI)
To: STATE CINCPAC
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 05 JUL 2006